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ABSTRACT

The development, enactment, evaluation and implications of the Companion Program at Southern Illinois University is discussed. The limited effectiveness of the campus counseling service due to spatio-temporal boundaries and, consequently, the growing need for the use of supervised non-professionals to extend effectiveness gave rise to the development of this program. Companions (volunteer helpers) were recruited from a Psychology of Personality course. The two major commitments for participation in the group were: (1) to attend and participate in weekly training meetings; and (2) to maintain reasonable contact with the assigned friend. Testing of companions included: (1) the California Psychological Inventory; (2) Edwards' Personnel Schedule; and (3) the Mooney Problem Checklist. A descriptive picture of the companions was utilized to see what kind of student would volunteer and to match companions and friends (those receiving help). "The Good Friend Test", an outgrowth of this program, and a short information form were the only responsibilities of the friends. Evaluation and further implications for growth and research conclude the discussion. (TL)

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PRELIMINARY EXPERIENCES WITH THE COMPANION PROGRAM--THE STUDENT HELPERS[1]

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My colleague described what the Companion Program is all about and how it presently operates, that is, a close up view of what goes on in the Companion Program. I would like to focus on the thinking that suggested the need for this Program, how the Program evolved to its present state, our informal evaluations, and our plans for the further development of the Program.

Several considerations led to the decision to attempt to utilize Companions to aid in the treatment of the target population. First was our suspicion that the spatio-temporal boundaries of the campus counseling services create an institutional press and may limit the effectiveness of professional counseling in a professional setting (Goffman, 1961; Sinnett, 1969; Wolff, 1969). Second was the growing recognition among mental health workers that the demand for psychological services is expanding more rapidly than the current availability of such services and that one experienced counselor can direct and supervise several lay counselors. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that non-professional mental health workers can fill the gap in the widening distance between the supply and demand for psychological services (Rioch, Elkes, & Flint, 1965; Schofield, 1964; Cowen, Gardner, & Zax, 1967; Carkhuff, 1968). Thirdly it occurred to us that non-professional workers who are closer to the peer level of the target population with respect to social position, developing skills, student frustrations,

problems of living, and motivation have particular advantages lacking to the professional counselor operating within the highly structured, central counseling treatment system (Sinnett, 1969; Armstrong, 1969). The counselor has his techniques and theories at stake whereas non-professionals are more in contact with clients' uncertainty, are less sure and formulative, and have to rely more upon themselves (Carkhuff, 1968). Finally, it was felt that student participation could provide a teaching and/or training experience for students interested in mental health work, personal growth, or simply in learning about friendship.

To date, our major involvements in the Companion Program have been with the Companions, that is, the volunteer helpers. It was felt at the initiation of the Program that there was a need to obtain a feel for the characteristics of the students who would volunteer to serve as companions, to define the companion's role, and to identify appropriate components for a training program. As a consequence of our major emphasis on the Companions, plans to assess the Companions' helpfulness to the friends (the target population)are currently being formulated. Our present concerns are centered on criteria for effective friendship, measurement of such criteria, and describing the precise role of the Companions. Now let us move on to describing what happened as we commenced the Companion Program.

The Summer Program

In the Summer of 1969, it was decided to recruit companions from a junior level course in personality theory. As part of their course projects, Companions were given the option of writing a review of a self-help book or of participating in the Companion Program training groups. The two major

commitments for participation in the groups were to (1) attend and participate in weekly training meetings and (2) maintain reasonable contact with the assigned friend. The Companions' activities consisted of completing a brief Contact Report for each contact with their friends, psychological testing, discussion in the training meetings of the relationship each Companion had with his friend, and evaluation of the Program at the quarter's end. Thirty-three of the 77 students enrolled in the course volunteered to serve as a Companion and, of these 33, twenty-six remained and fulfilled their major commitments. Testing consisted of the California Psychological Inventory, the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, and the Mooney Problem Checklist. A tentative descriptive picture of the Companions can be sketched by comparing them with the published norms for college students.

The mean profiles on the California Psychological Inventory resembled those for male and female college students except for the Companions' slightly higher scores on the social presence, self-acceptance, achievement via independence, and flexibility scales. The Companions personality profiles appeared in general to be quite similar to that of typical college students--that is, showing relatively greater strengths in the areas of poise in personal and social interaction, sense of self-worth, and adaptibility in intellectual and social interests.

Some sex differences appeared on the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule which seemed to follow certain cultural stereotypes, for example females acknowledged more dependent nurturant needs (suc, nur, het) while males showed more independence (aut). Both sexes scored relatively high on Intraception--a scale intended to measure the need to understand and analyze the motives of others.

The Companions were not without problems and concerns of their own. On the Mooney Problem Checklist, the female companions acknowledged about three times as many problems of all types as the male companions (means of 56.3 and 21.7, respectively). Some companions appeared to manifest significant degrees of concern in particular areas of their own psychological makeup. These companions seemingly volunteered in order to develop greater understanding of themselves as well as of others. But since the Companion Program was considered to be only in its embryonic state at this point and, as others have noted that when indigenous members of a target group are mobilized to function as helpers the helpers themselves often expect and receive as much benefit as they give (Gelineau & Kantor, 1964; Sinnett, 1969), the decision was made to proceed using all the volunteers.

Of the 26 Companions in the Summer Program, fourteen were eventually assigned friends to contact. It was and has continued to be our experience that obtaining friends through referral sources is more difficult than the recruitment of volunteer companions. Companions who are unassigned to a friend usually continue to attend the training meetings and share the enthusiasm of Companions who have received assignments. However as the quarter continues on, their enthusiasm drops if they do not receive assignments and at that point some begin to drop out of the program. Our initial anxieties over the use of companions in this type of helping role dissipated as the program progressed. The companions' self-devised techniques and enthusiasm not only allayed our concerns but also strengthened our convictions that non-professional helpers possess certain advantages owing to their social position that are lacking to the professional. Companions also display a good deal of ingenuity in maintaining and varying their contacts with their friends--from attending

jazz festivals with the friends to taking foreign students along on their weekly shopping trips to the grocery story to asking the assigned friend to accompany the companion and his personal friends to the local pub for a beer and pizza.

In order to clarify what aspects of the program the companions felt needed greater stress, at the end of the Summer quarter companions were asked to rank the following aspects in order of their preferences for needed areas of Program emphasis: greater variety and frequency of peer contact, practice and role-playing in the training meetings, more case discussion in the training meetings, more formal teaching about friendship in the training meetings, and more discussion of specific problems of companions with regard to their friendship. Statistical analysis showed no significant preferences among the rankings (Kendall coefficient of concordance, $\underline{W} = .118$, n.s.). But there was a tendency for case discussion to be singled out as in need of greater emphasis. The lack of enough friends for assignment was also singled out and has continued to be noted by the companions in subsequent training groups as a trouble spot. By the end of the Summer quarter, we felt more comfortable with the idea that undergraduate volunteers could self-select themselves into a Companion service program and that the volunteers possessed adequate emotional resources, social skills, and motivation for appropriate types of involvement. In the final brief evaluation at the last training meeting, the Companions themselves raised questions over their own role-definition. Their concerns had occupied our thinking throughout the conceptualization and implementation of the Companion Program and continue to direct our involvement. Their four major concerns were: (1) what are the needs of the Companions to know about the characteristics and problems of the friends

they are trying to help? (2) what ethical responsibilities are incurred in sharing this information with their training groups? (3) is it feasible to introduce a more conscious choice into the assignment of the companions and the friends rather than rely on the trainers' intuition? and (4) how can evaluation be made of the friend without affecting the relationship?

The Fall Program

In the Fall Program of 1969, counselors at the Handicapped Student Services and in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation were also enlisted as referral sources as counselors in International Student Services and in the Counseling Center had not been able to supply a sufficient number of referrals. Companions were again recruited from the same Personality course. At this point we felt confident that the Program could be presented to undergraduates as a relevant educational experience such that it could be made strictly voluntary. In the initial presentation to the 110 students in the course, four personal benefits of the Program were pointed out: (1) a service-oriented experience supervised by professional counselors; (2) an opportunity to learn about friendships; (3) participation in the planning and review of a service program; and (4) the experience of working in a service capacity to someone who was in need. Thirty-one students were recruited and 26 attended the first two meetings. Attrition was low from here on. The Companions mean score on the Interpersonal Competency Scale (Holland and Baird, 1968) was 11.7 with a range from 7 to 16. The Companions mean score was very similar to the average reported for college students. The Interpersonal Competency Scale attempts to measure various aspects of a person's positive mental health and personal effectiveness. It has been related to college students' self-ratings, life goals, and achievement in college. We also wanted to implement the suggestion from the previous Summer Quarter that some type of matching procedure be used to pair the companions with the friends that would give consideration to the preferences of both

parties. To meet this goal, Dr. Raynard began to develop the Good Friend Test. The first version consisted of 35 attributes of a good friendship. The specific items were composed from ideas about friendship gleaned from a wide variety of sources including suggestions from the Summer companions. Both the Companions and the friends rated each attribute on a 7-point scale reflecting how much they valued each attribute in a good friend. Initially companions and friends were matched on the degree of similarity in rating the attributes. However, the matching became less rigorous after the first few weeks of the Fall Program due to the greater number of Companions than friends being referred to the program.

In the informal evaluation at the end of the Fall Quarter, Companions were asked to rate several ways in which they thought they had been helpful to their friends and to comment on various aspects of the Program. According to the ratings, Companions thought they had been of most benefit in helping their friends to be caring and to show interest in another, in learning to trust someone, and in gaining social poise and adequacy. Companions commented that they liked most the small and informal training meetings, which we had made a conscious effort to provide. There was also a growing concern on the Companions' part to know of what help, if any, they had been to their friends. This served as a reminder that evaluations of the friends was necessary to help assess the worth of the program. Interestingly, 73 percent of the companions expressed a desire to continue their relationship with their friends into the next quarter, though the Companions' commitment to the Program did not extend beyond the Fall Quarter.

The Winter Program

In the present Winter Quarter, 33 volunteer companions were initially recruited. The Companions scored an average of 13.9 (range from 5 to 19) on the Interpersonal Competency Scale. This was slightly above the 11.56 average reported for college students (Holland & Baird, 1968). In addition, an attempt was made to match Companions and friends on the revised Good Friend Test. At present, we are attempting to assess effects of the Winter Program on the friends using the Interpersonal Competency Scale and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Inventory (Schutz, 1958).

Let me take a moment to describe our most concentrated efforts this quarter, namely development of the Good Friend Test. The revised Test consists of 60 attributes grouped into six categories. The categories are modeled after Maslow's six levels of needs: physical needs, security needs, approval needs, esteem needs, productive needs, and creative needs. It is Maslow's contention that one cannot move on to meet needs at higher levels. in the need hierarchy until needs have first been met at the lower levels Several graduate students are currently completing reliability and validity studies of the Good Friend Test. Table 1 presents intercorrelations from one study of the six subtests for a group of students (N = 45) taking the Good Friend Test under three instructional sets. All correlations above .24 are significant at the .05 level. Students in this study were instructed to take the Test rating (1) attributes they valued in their ideal friend, (2) attributes valued in their best friend, and (3) attributes valued in a casual friend. The largest correlations were obtained between ratings of the best and ideal friends. It is our assumption that as friendship develops movement can be expected on the Test toward greater degrees of satisfaction of relationship needs.

Future Plans

In the upcoming Spring and Summer Quarters, the Companion Program has been funded to formally study movement in developing friendships. This will be accomplished by attempting to match Companions and friends with high, medium, and low degrees of similarity on the Good Friend Test. It is our hypothesis that moderate degrees of similarity will yield the most productive movement. Companions and friends will also be matched on similarity with regard to their social values. We expect that high similarity with regard to social variables will produce a more efficacious outcome. Control groups consisting of (1) Companions with no training groups and (2) randomly matched Companions and friends will also be studied.

Beginning in the Fall of 1970, we are considering the possibility of screening all incoming freshmen with the Good Friend Test and of forming teams composed of Companions who had previously been in the Program. These teams would be used to help identify, approach, and get members of the target population involved in the Program.

In summarizing, it is our belief, based on limited experience, that students are interested in helping their fellow students, that they have certain advantages over professionals who work within the University treatment system, and that such involvement when professionally supervised can be a valuable experience for students who want to personally involve themselves in learning if and how they can be effective interpersonally in helping others. Moreover, this experience has direct relevance for those students already

contemplating careers in related helping professions and may in fact serve to recruit persons who otherwise would not know that they enjoyed the personal involvement implicit in helping professions. With the confidence we have gained in the viability of such a program we plan to move on to the business of determining conditions making such a program maximally effective through continual program evaluations. We hope that you have a more detailed account of how the Companion Program evolved, the kinds of feedback the participants have provided, and how such a Program can be developed. We believe that it represents one possible answer to those who feel that programs are incompatible with research and evaluation.

Instructional Sets Correlated	Good Friend Subtests					
	1 Physical needs	2 Security needs	3 Approval needs	4 Esteem needs	5 Productive needs	6 Creative needs
IDEAL-BEST	.515*	.435*	.640*	.486*	.465*	.642*
IDEAL-CASUAL	.236	.435*	.324*	.413*	.256*	.102
BEST-CASUAL	.478*	.085	.410*	.241*	.168	.066

*$p < .05$

Table 1. Intercorrelations of subtest scores on Good Friend Test under varying instructional sets. (N = 45)

Footnotes

[1]The Companion Program was originally conceived of and initiated by Richard C. Raynard, Ph.D., Counseling and Testing Center, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale Campus.

[2]Presented at the American College Personnel Association Convention, March, 1970, St. Louis, Missouri.

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPANION PROGRAM[1]

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I suppose the first question one might ask would be just what is the Companion Program, as set up at the Counseling and Testing Center at Southern Illinois University? Is it a baby-sitting society, a dating service, a group of lay counselors?

The answer is, simply, all of these and none of these. At the most basic level, the Companion Program consists of undergraduate college students who have volunteered to give their time in the interest of establishing a relationship with another person. No limits or restraints are placed on that relationship except those established by the two parties involved.

The volunteer (whom we call the Companion) commits himself a little more, however, in that we ask some additional things of him. We sometimes ask him to take tests; we always ask that he maintain contact with us by attending a weekly training meeting of approximately two hours. At these meetings we want him to verbally explore with us, the Trainers, and other Companions (from 2 - 5), the dynamics of the relationship he has with the Friend (and by the Friend, we mean that student who will be receiving the help). We also ask that the Companion actively participate in the more didactic aspects of the training, by listening, saying how he feels, and interacting with us, the Trainers.

What this boils down to for the Companion is this: he sees his Friend as often as they want in whatever capacity they work out, but he must be

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willing to be completely open with the Group about all aspects of their relationship. This means he must attend the weekly group training meeting.

A person volunteers to be a Companion after he has heard a brief talk about the program in a junior level psychology of personality course. This talk is a simple outline of the purpose and the function of the program. After the talk, the students in the class are given the opportunity to choose to volunteer by signing up to meet at a particular time. They get out of no course work, get no grade manipulation. They get nothing out of becoming a Companion except the opportunity to grow.

That is, they have the chance to interact with a peer in a meaningful and helpful, honest friendship experience. They also have the opportunity to meet with a professionally trained person to learn about friendship, and, with that trained person and other Companions, to learn about themselves.

With this knowledge, they volunteer. When they come to the first meeting they usually find themselves with a group of strangers, themselves volunteers, who are interested in people. The focus of the first session is on spelling out in detail just what the program is. The focus of the second session is often on taking tests designed to tell us what kinds of people tend to volunteer for the program, what they are like at the beginning of the program, and, most importantly, to match them with the person who will be their Friend.

This matching is done on the basis of a short, easily completed form called the "Good Friend Test" which the Friend will have completed also. (My colleague will speak to you more about this instrument later.)

Hopefully, the remainder of the second meeting is spent in giving out assignments--that is, in presenting each Companion with the name, address and phone number, as well as other significant information, about the Friend, the person he will be contacting. If any additional time remains in the second session, it is usually spent dealing with questions about the arrangment of

meetings between the two; questions such as "What do I say when I call him?" "Should I go to his apartment or just call first?" "Will he be expecting my call?" "Should I tell him that I'm from the Program?" These seem to consistently be the sorts of initial problems and worries the Companions feel the need to talk about.

These anxieties are dealt with by the Trainer and the Group in a number of different ways such as discussion, role-playing, etc.

Sometime during the week after the second session, the Companion who has been given an assignment, makes contact with that person. Most times the initial contact is by phone and the two set up a time and a place at which they will meet. This is the beginning of the relationship between them.

At the third session, each Companion with an assignment turns in a brief form indicating where he feels the relationship is and where it is going. The Companion then reveals to the group his feelings, fears, and hopes about the relationship and what's been happening, and he asks the Group for help or suggestions related to any problems he sees coming up. These problems might take such forms as "I think he sees me as a counselor and I really don't want that." or "I find that I'm doing all the talking and planning. How can I get him to do some?" or, simply, "Where are some good places you can suggest that I might take this person so he gets out a little more?"

The Companion also makes responses in regard to the feelings he has concerning the Friend. He may say such things as "There's something about the guy I just can't buy," or "I really feel uncomfortable with this girl." These feelings are then dealt with in the group as <u>real</u> feelings; what they might mean and how they can be handled becomes an important focus for the Group.

Now I've already mentioned the Training Group quite a bit, but in a rather peripheral manner, keeping the Companion as the center of attention.

The Group itself constitutes a rather vital force in the Companion Program, both as a training group for Companions and as a resource throughout the program.

Just what is it and how does it operate?

The Group consists of a professionally-trained leader and a number of Companions. It has not been, in my experience, a sensitivity group, although the personal feelings and emotions that come out during the interaction sometimes take it very far in that direction. The Group does have a clearly stated purpose, to understand and explore the dynamics of friendship. But this rather general purpose can go in any number of directions in a specific group.

The Groups vary widely in their interaction. Some seem content to sit back and take in more didactic lectures, looking to the Trainer for a great deal of structure. Other groups interact more vigorously with the focus centering on the Friends. And finally, perhaps the most enjoyable to work with and yet the most challenging, are the groups **which interact with the focus on members' own feelings in relation to the Friends.**

The Trainer-leaders supply the Groups with material which the Group may use to help them in understanding their relationship with their Friends. This material varies--from recommending passages in Albert Ellis' How to Live with a Neurotic to a poem Of Course I Believe by Lyman K. Randall.

Group sessions vary, from initial worries about going about meeting their Friends, to setting limits on their personal time available. The theoretical bias of the Trainers at all times stresses "openness" and "sharing." The Group is, in every sense, a "group," and what has come to be called "group process" is as operative here as anywhere else.

Having spoken at some length about the Companion and the Group, let me now direct my attention to those people whom we call the Friends. These are

essentially the target population for whom the program is designed. To reach these people and somehow enrich their college experience, and, I can say somewhat immodestly, their lives, is one of the basic goals of the whole Program. In a sense, the Program exists <u>for them</u>.

The most basic direction Richard Raynard, director and originator of the Program at SIU, has taken for the Program is toward the withdrawn, "lost" sort of person who is for some reason socially-isolated, alienated, without someone close, cut-off from the college community. Originally, this population was identified and referred by counselors from either the Counseling and Testing Center itself, or from International Services. This past quarter, however, an experimental shift has occurred with the result being that some of the Friends have been contacted by the Resident Fellows who live in the dormitories and have become aware of conspicuously isolated individuals. The Resident Fellows, after consulting with their Resident Counselors, approach these potential Friends, explain the Program to them, and offer them the opportunity of participating. The potential Friend can then choose to either accept or reject the offer. (If he rejects it, he is not contacted further.)

As often happens, however, he chooses to accept the Program. When someone chooses to accept, whether the has been approached by his R.F., or by his counselor, he must do two things: (1) take a short test called "The Good Friend Test," and (2) fill out a very brief information form which asks for his name, address, phone number, etc.

The Friend then just sits back and does no more. He is contacted by a Companion and the relationship begins. In most cases it has been a <u>continuing, growing experience</u> in which both participants have developed a positive friendship relationship. Feedback has come to us indicating that such relationships

have usually continued even after the participants no longer are part of the Companion Program.

How much does the Friend get out of it? Right now we have no direct way of knowing other than by the Companion's report. We are in the process of finding a method to ascertain an answer to that question, as it is obviously of the most vital importance to us. But from the written and verbal acknowledgements of the Companions, counselors, and R.F.'s, admittedly second-hand data, it certainly looks from our perspective that it is an enriching experience for the Friend.

Let me say a brief word or two about the Trainers, those individuals who lead the Groups. These people have in the past tended to be advanced graduate students in either clinical or counseling psychology who are working as half-time assistants in the Counseling and Testing Center. They have had a Master's Degree. Also, Dr. Richard Raynard, sponsor of the program, has participated actively in the leadership of these Groups.

These Trainers are versed in working with groups and have some background in group dynamics. They have primary responsibility for any didactic work in the group as well as attempting to keep the group focused or centered on Companions, Friends, interactions, and feelings. This part of the job is not as difficult as the grappling a Trainer must sometimes do with himself and his own value system. How does he react, for example, when a Companion reveals to the Group that he drops acid and asks about seeing the Friend, who happens to be a nonuser, while the Companion is still tripping? Or how does he react when a Companion reveals to the Group he is in the midst of a sexual encounter with the Friend?

Is a Trainer "copping out" in turning such questions over to the Group for the Group to deal with? I think some of us might say definitely yes while others might say that <u>is</u> the only appropriate solution. Our position has been that a Trainer cannot dictate morality, cannot impose his own arbi-

trary limits on such relationships. If Companions can come and openly talk about such relationships, whatever direction they may take, he is fulfilling his part of the bargain and can remain affiliated with the Program. When a time comes when the Companion can no longer attend the Group and be honest about the relationship and his feelings, then it is the duty of the Trainer to ask that Companion to disaffiliate himself from the Program and to inform his Friend of this disaffiliation.

Up until now I've spoken about what the Program is. Before I finish, I'd like to add a few words on how the Program came into existence and what some of its implications are for you here today.

Essentially, this particular program is the "brain child"'of one person, Dr. Richard Raynard, a counselor at the Counseling and Testing Center and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Southern Illinois University. Based on his own experiences in college and his perceptions of the large multiversity that SIU was becoming, as well as his familiarity with experiments such as Holzberg's in 1965 and Sanders in 1968 using lay counselors in state hospitals, and Reissman's 1964 attempt in neighborhood health centers, Dr. Raynard pinpointed the target population he wanted to try and reach at SIU. These ended up as the physically handicapped, the foreign student, the parolee, and isolated students from campus living areas. He began putting these thoughts together in the summer of 1968 and the Program was begun in a very preliminary manner in the Summer of 1969, one year later.

It seems those kinds of programs have numerous implications. Certainly it expands upon the impact and the effectiveness of the Counselor or Trainer, who, in an act of direct community service, becomes a strong resource with potential that can be tapped in any number of settings. At SIU we have been centered at the University and directed our attention there; this certainly need not be the case elsewhere. These sorts of programs are truly only the

beginning of a vigorous new thrust in community psychology. Hopefully, students who participate in such direct service experiences may soon receive course credit from them.

But the bigger issue is the bold new approaches that such ideas encapsulate. They get the counselors and deans and assistant deans and graduate students out of their offices, out of their cubicles, out of their ivory towers--to where it's happening!